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ABSTRACT

This document summarizes the results of an open-ended questionnaire sent to teachers of English as a second language concerning the education of immigrant children newly arrived in Canada. Rather than in statistical form, the results are in the form of a general discussion of statements made by the teachers on various topics. Initial consideration is given to the educational attitudes, problems, and needs of the new Canadian child. The family and the school's role in helping the entire family are considered. Other general topics are current activities of the school day, placement procedures, the need for recognizing the differences in foreign cultures and educational systems, and the general situation in Canada. Three types of language programs are discussed. The appendix includes a sample of the questionnaire. (VM)

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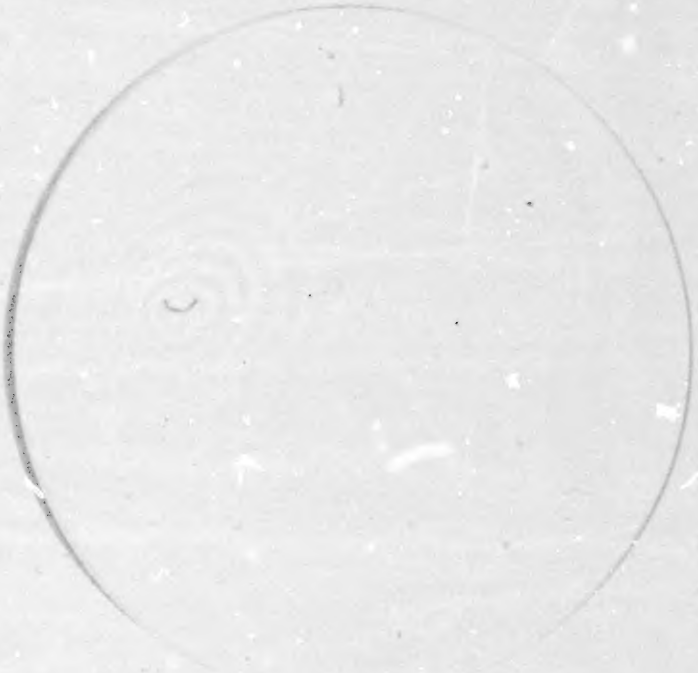

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NEW CANADIAN ACTIVITIES: SUMMARY OF TEACHERS' RESPONSES TO A QUESTIONNAIRE

Susanne Mowat
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March, 1969.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page No.
INTRODUCTION	1
The New Canadian Child: "Isolation...a sense of fear...."	2
Priorities for the School	9
The School Day: Current Activities	11
Complaints and Suggestions	13
(a) Placement Procedures	13
(b) Education Systems Abroad	15
(c) The Situation Here	16
A Discussion of Three "Programmes"	19
SUMMARY	23
APPENDIX	24
REFERENCES	25

NEW CANADIAN ACTIVITIES: SUMMARY OF TEACHERS' RESPONSES TO A QUESTIONNAIRE

INTRODUCTION

An introduction to a summary of responses to an open-ended questionnaire can well begin with a brief discussion of the instrument used and warningsof its limitations. The questionnaire discussed in these pages is one sent in May, 1968 to all teachers of English as a second language in the City of Toronto. It consisted of eight intentionally general questions, each capable of wide interpretation (see Appendix). It was hoped that responses would be indicative of attitudes, feelings, and ideas held by those responsible for much of the immigrant student's introduction to Canadian language and culture.

At this point a warning should be given. It should be noted first that the report records opinions of teachers only. It is possible that some of the responses reflect prejudices or misinformation. The responses reflect the teachers' perceptions, which may or may not be true. This factor does not, however, limit the importance of the responses. As W. I. Thomas' theorem states, "If men define situations as real, then they are real in their consequences." (Thomas, cited in Merton, 1948).

Of 184 questionnaires sent, 74, or 40.2% were returned, as indicated in the following table:

	Sent	Returned	Per Cent Returned
Main Street	15	5	33.3
Withdrawal	122	43	35.3
Regional Reception Centre	47	19	40.4
Programme Unknown	--	7	----
TOTAL	184	74	40.2

This is not a high response rate* for such a relatively homogeneous population, and the question arises as to what kind of bias may be present in the results. There is some evidence that the less complete the data are, the more likely they are biased in favour of that section of the sample more actively involved in the subject matter at hand (Donald, 1960; Mayer and Pratt, 1966-67). The second warning must, therefore, be given, i.e. although the responses in this case can quite possibly be taken as representing the more active aspects of the existing situation fairly well, there is room for reasonable doubt.

Originally an attempt was made to organize these responses on a question by question basis but so much repetition and over-lapping resulted that the attempt was abandoned. Hence the following pages are organized according to theme. Quotations are lifted directly from the teachers' answers; because the questionnaires were anonymous, identification of those quoted is impossible.

The New Canadian Child: "Isolation...a sense of fear...."

The profile drawn of the New Canadian child is not at first an enviable one. Most teachers see him as frustrated by his failure to

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* In a variety of situations where unsolicited mail questionnaires have been used to obtain information, respondents have been shown to have slightly more formal education, higher social status and higher income than non-respondents. For a homogeneous population, and furthermore one that as a whole meets these criteria (e.g., members of a professional organization, or teachers of English as a second language in a large urban area), a high response rate would be 85-95%. This is contrasted to surveys of households which often report results on the basis of a response rate of less than 25% (Mayer and Pratt, 1966-67). Possible explanations for the relatively low response rates in the present study include the fact that no follow-up techniques were used.

express himself and frequently suffering from feelings of loneliness, insecurity, and inferiority. His lack of comprehension in class often makes him rowdy, while his confusion about Canadian culture often makes him an object of ridicule to Canadian students. Asked about the "greatest problems" facing New Canadian children, one teacher summed them up as, "Isolation: cut off from normal communication. A sense of fear because of the estrangement of everything." Another teacher wrote of the children arriving at a Canadian school:

> "They are always young, usually inexperienced, and at first often confused. They feel that things will probably be the same as in their own countries and yet they are afraid that it will be very different. They don't really know."

On the more positive side (at least from the schools' point of view) it is assumed by most teachers that the students do want to learn English and to adapt themselves to Canadian culture. One teacher wrote that "New Canadian children accept the challenge of a new language readily and want to adapt themselves to our society" because they are eager "to be accepted as they are, to be one of us, not Italians, Greeks, etc. but Canadians." Looking at motivation from another angle, another teacher wrote:

> "Some of course as some Canadian children, are eager for higher education. Others are only interested in finding a secure job after they have finished the required years of schooling."

One teacher complained that the students "want to learn to read and write English but they don't really care if they learn to speak well!"

For some children, it was noted, "a conflict develops concerning the advantages and disadvantages of their status as New Canadians." Another teacher echoed a similar theme:

> "Older pupils expect privileges special only to them, e.g., an option to take physical education, swimming, etc. These special privileges I do not feel should be given as it is part of the curriculum of the school and not up to the individual student."

A strong feeling was expressed that immigrant children are as much a product of their particular native culture as they are of their own more individual characteristics. Teachers, therefore, commented upon what was to them the apparent differences among ethnic groups, and in fact suggested that the Research Department consider these differences in some future study*. Several mentioned one or two groups that in particular had attracted their attention.

> "You might find out why the difference in learning enthusiasm within the various New Canadian nationalities. Why are some like the Chinese (mostly) so eager and quick, and others such as the Portuguese so indifferent. Can you find ways of getting through to them?"

> "Yes, the difficulties of the various ethnic groups in adjusting to this culture and language, specifically Italian as opposed to Portuguese."

Two other teachers specifically mentioned the Chinese and their special problems in learning to read and write English. Another mentioned eight Greek students who seemed to be far behind students of other language groups who arrived at similar times about two years ago. Other teachers couched their curiosity in more general terms, and suggested research into the "relationship between native culture and learning ability in Canada."

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* This suggestion was followed by the Research Department and in November 1968 work began on the preparation of multi-media packages which will seek to explain, through a variety of means, aspects of the cultures of Toronto's most populous immigrant groups. Reports are also being prepared, for inclusion in the packages, discussing education systems in various countries. (See pp. 14-15 of this report.)

Another suggested a "comparison of frequency of eye defects (e.g., aniseconia*, hearing loss, colour blindness etc.)" between Canadians and newcomers.

The Child's Canadian World: Family and the Larger Community

In the immediate cultural and social environment of the New Canadian child, teachers saw sources of potential and actual confusion, unhappiness, and impediments to progress. The mere existence of ethnic communities, for example, was seen by some teachers as the most powerful force impeding acculturation -- if the community is large enough to satisfy most social and vocational needs, the child need never move beyond it and often may not try.

It is the family unit, however, that is viewed with most concern, both in terms of the hardships it suffers and the burdens it places on the child. A typical family condition was outlined by one teacher:

> "The upheaval of family life, working parents, inability to find work, financial problems, inflexibility of parents in a new environment...."

One teacher felt that the most serious consequence of this economic instability was that families were often forced to live in overcrowded conditions or to move frequently in search of better accommodation. Other teachers mentioned, "immediate health needs and financing for the first six months," as pressing problems, or "money to buy necessities, e.g., lock, gymn outfit, etc." Needless to say these kinds of stresses are reflected in the outlook of the children.

Of even greater importance, if one is to judge by the quantity of response alone, are the stresses being placed on the child by parents

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* Dictionaries, medical and otherwise, do not list this word.

who either will not or cannot adjust as rapidly as their children. Parents who don't speak English at home, or who cannot realize how different is the non-home life of their children, can create almost intolerable tensions for their children. Teachers referred to the "culture conflict" between home and school, between the old culture and the new, again and again.

The vast majority of teachers felt that these family or community problems were the problems of the schools as well and that the schools should offer some form of social aid if only to alleviate responsibilities that otherwise fall upon the classroom teachers. Asked the most important thing(s) the school could do for New Canadian children, teachers responded that it must be a "bridge between cultures," a force "to narrow the gulf between cultures," not only by demonstrating and interpreting Canadian culture to parents as well as children but by exhibiting respect for and a desire to understand the native cultures of New Canadian families -- providing a synthesis of sorts for the child. One teacher stated that New Canadian parents fear that the school will facilitate their child's "alienation from family and mother culture": many teachers expressed the necessity of establishing contact between parents and the school.

A number of teachers were also in favour of offering practical advice to parents in such areas as legal counselling and the social agencies available to them -- "a well fed family with a working father is rarely a problem." Three teachers felt that New Canadian parents anticipate help from the schools anyway, "help with problems faced in the community," welfare and free health services. One teacher suggested that contact could be provided by use of:

> "...liaison workers who could be taken from the ranks of the staff who have a reasonable knowledge of the language of any newcomer within a school or a district. He or she would advise on such things as medical insurance, put home in contact with family services, etc.; indicate the facilities for adults to learn English; stress the importance of education for their children; how they can help themselves and their families to adapt to the new life."

The desirability of creating home and school contact through the use of interpreters was outlined by another teacher as well:

> "...we must stress individual value and do a job of interpreting the schools to the parents and reassure them. Where major cultural divisions occur we must have experienced people available or know where to find Canadians with similar backgrounds to the New Canadians so that they can interpret the school and new ideas to parents in terms the parents can understand, e.g., a successful lawyer in Canada from the same village in a rural part of Europe as a New Canadian family was very helpful when a crisis arose over a brilliant boy being taken out of school because he was at last old enough to leave."

Language lessons for teachers and translated information pamphlets for parents were also suggested.

Alleviation of the "hidden mother factor" received much attention and stimulated specific suggestions. Time and time again teachers recommended that the schools provide counselling and babysitting services in order to enable the parents to participate in special English classes. Other teachers emphasized the necessity of providing day classes for New Canadian mothers and possibly even for their pre-school children. To many teachers, the important thing is "education of parents -- especially mothers who are rather reticent about joining language classes and other groups." Others wrote:

> "Research the role of the New Canadian woman in her new environment. An approach whereby the woman could be aided to assimilate with her new environment and thereby retain her self respect."

> "Help for mothers could be studied. Home economists could teach them nutrition, food buying, budgeting, etc."

Perhaps from a slightly different viewpoint, one teacher suggested investigation of New Canadians' attitudes towards school*. Another enquired, "Have New Canadian children and parents been interviewed to find out what they would like?"

With few exceptions, the teachers agreed that New Canadian parents were "for the most part highly motivated and ambitious for their children" -- "they came to Canada to give their children the opportunities that they themselves did not have." Thus the parents' educational aspirations are motivated by desires for their children's material and social success. Fifteen teachers in fact felt that parents expected an education which would "enable their children to get an 'inside job' (i.e. not ditch-digger)." Only six teachers felt that the parents considered their childrens' primary and secondary education as a preparation for "higher learning."

Several teachers expressed the opinion that the parents were extremely anxious for their children to obtain the "knowledge and skills necessary for integration into Canadian life." They "expect their children to learn English as soon as possible so that they can help the parents interpret what is going on around them." On the other hand, five teachers indicated that parents expected the school to maintain the native language and culture.

> "Many parents seem to expect the schools to teach the children in their own language and to make progress in the various subject areas without knowing English."

(Another teacher expressed interest in the relative progress of students who maintain their mother tongue and those who make no attempt to do so.)

The majority of teachers felt that the New Canadian parents were "as a rule very educationally oriented." Only one expressed the opinion that:

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* This suggestion is incorporated in a current study.

> "Some resent the fact that their children are obliged to go to school until they are sixteen. Often they would prefer them to be working and helping out financially. Many immigrant children do work after hours in the 'family business'."

One teacher did grumble that parents "expect miracles -- that the child be an angel or forcibly made one." Another noted:

> "In their world of 'in between' the lost bewildered parents, preoccupied with their own frustrations, expect too much of school."

Priorities for the School

Despite these suggestions of expansion into the community, a large number of teachers felt that the schools' most important role concerned the children: the fulfilment of their emotional needs. In fact, 27 teachers noted that students expect "sympathetic understanding and assistance as they adjust." The teachers felt that the students look to the school to provide an atmosphere of security, a place to belong to, where they receive acceptance for what they are, recognition of their individual talents, and sympathy for their personal as well as their social and academic problems. Provision of this kind of atmosphere, the teachers felt, is essential. One teacher expressed the desire that students be given

> "one adult who shows a genuine interest in their individual worth, someone (special English teacher, vice-principal, etc.) who will make it his responsibility to let the child know that he is not alone."

Another teacher wrote:

> "New Canadians should be taught to value themselves as unique individuals, not as second class citizens but rather as valuable assets to our existing society with regard to their own experiences which in many respects they hold as an advantage over the child who has never faced the emotional impact of changing societies and values."

Placing New Canadians together in classes of the same language level, and in grades according to age were suggested as means of reducing the students' feelings of insecurity and inferiority, as was the introduction of a programme which would not retard the student in other areas while he learned English.

The most frequent proposal was that a variety of "activities where language is not a hindrance to success" should be offered in the classroom, in order to give the child the opportunity to express himself and 'help him become a meaningful and accepted member of class (i.e. community) by competing on his own abilities and his own terms." (One teacher, incidentally, noted that "New Math throws them off in an area where they used to be as good as or even excel over native Canadians" and suggested that they be introduced very gradually to the New Math while still working with the old and be allowed "to change at their own speed -- no forcing -- being careful not to downgrade his country's way.")

For similar reasons, friendships with other children, particularly Canadian children, were enthusiastically supported. Comparative culture studies and "instruction in their own language about their own culture" should be provided in order to increase the child's understanding of his special situation. A "buddy system" in the school and a programme of exchange in the home with New Canadian and native Canadian students was recommended as well.

> "Perhaps [one teacher wrote] the school could supply a number of approved families who could take one New Canadian for three to six months as a member of the household and who would encourage social contact."

> "Attention should be given to getting New Canadian teen-agers of different nationalities to mix with each other and with native Canadians. Their natural tendency to form cliques of their own kind is often an impediment in their learning English and is unhealthy for the Canadian community as a whole. This should be done in such a way that they do not feel a threat to their native culture. Valuable aspects of their culture such as language should be given encouragement."

Other teachers felt that the schools' role was to give the students "an adequate command of the English language" as soon as possible in order to hasten the students' integration into the regular school programme and into Canadian society. Only 1 of 13 teachers exhibited greater concern for the quality of English learned than for the rapidity of the child's assimilation. General consensus was that familiarizing New Canadians with Canadian culture should be achieved as rapidly as learning the language. Only one felt that a process of very gradual assimilation would be more effective. The particular slice of Canadian culture experienced in Toronto of course includes the complexities of urban life; these, the teachers felt, had to be explained and could be by means of field trips, translations of signs, etc. Teachers who stressed the aid-to-assimilation role of the school wrote things like, "teach them to think Canadian," or,

> "give them some knowledge of all important aspects of Canadian life (geography, government, history, etc.) -- act as a stepping stone for their full integration into Canadian life."

The School Day: Current Activities

In discussing activities presently common in their classroom, several teachers were anxious to establish the fact that the activities varied according to the level of their students -- that beginners received

lessons in basic sentence structure and vocabulary, juniors participated in field trips and conversation, and advanced students concentrated on reading, writing and preparation for assimilation into the regular programme.

Approximately 60% of the teachers gave priority to activities which stimulated oral exercise. Informal conversation (including discussions of Canadian customs and/or other cultures) was considered the most frequent and most beneficial of classroom activities. Question and answer periods and language games were frequently mentioned; only five teachers included formal vocabulary and phonic drills. Oral language practice can of course result from "meaningful experiences." Field trips were enthusiastically supported as worthwhile activities by half the teachers, partially because they initiated various beneficial activities -- discussions, story writing and making charts based on their experiences.

Ten teachers reported they gave their students the opportunity to express themselves and to increase their comprehension of a variety of situations on other than a purely verbal level by means of creative activities such as painting, sculpting, acting, cooking, etc. An equal number stressed writing as a creative as well as a formal language exercise. Approximately one-quarter of the teachers listed reading as a frequent activity in their classrooms.

Use of teaching aids was mentioned by 14 teachers. Those most frequently used are the language master, overhead projector, experience charts, film strips, record player and tape recorder. A few unstructured but very common activities were "talking and laughter," "chewing gum, noise, and the boys bother the girls."

Complaints and Suggestions

(a) Placement Procedures

One of the aspects of the system that came under most censure was placement procedures of New Canadian pupils, both when they arrive and when they depart special English classes to join the regular streams. It must first be understood that solutions are not easy to find for the variety of individual problems in this area: e.g., the student who has had perhaps two or three years of schooling but who is 14 or 15 years of age; the student who has been in the labour force of his own country and considered to be a man before coming to Canada, where he is still of school age; the student who has a learning disability or a severe emotional problem. One teacher noted:

> "The educational systems are so diverse within this country. We expect too much of students who for example because of age are placed in Gr. 8 (15 years old) and have only completed 4 yrs. of school. Their parents are very ambitious for them. The resentment grows as the frustrated children complain to the parents about poor teachers and poor systems. The parents believe and absorb the remarks of their offspring. Hence when we try to gear their children to vocational programmes, etc. we often meet with opposition. We of course must take their age into account with placement, however, their maturity, knowledge and capabilities must also be known."

Even identification of these problems can take some time: as one teacher noted, "too many experienced teachers think that a student has only a language problem because he seems bright -- or is hard-working, etc. -- when actually his real problem is lack of intelligence." Questions of identification plagued many teachers, who asked that there be found, or created, devices to evaluate the ability of New Canadian children.

"Devise an I.Q. test that does not penalize New Canadians," was a request repeated many times in one form or another. Other teachers were less specific, and asked for

> "...some assessment of the pupil's abilities, personality development and past education... be made by an interpreter, psychologist type of person - before or at the very beginning of the child's entry into the Canadian school system."

More than one teacher expressed her opinion that there were not enough of these "psychologist type" persons:

> "In the area of child adjustment services; i.e. I think more personnel should be available. At our school and with the lack of psychologists trained in this area (ethnic problems) those children who are dull, brain-damaged, etc., are not tended to properly."

Others asked for the creation of special provisions for slow learners, "similar to what is provided for English speakers in opportunity classes," or special remedial reading classes.

Other teachers noted that "there must be <u>some</u> means of directing students to schools where they can get an appropriate course according to their wishes. The random registration of students should be prevented." A follow-up contact with other schools once the students leave was suggested, and the Research Department was asked to consider

> "...the transition from elementary to secondary levels. Consider the problem of the gifted adolescent who must attend a high school that has no special English instruction (or instructor). Some 11, 12, 13 year old pupils are being placed in Grade V classes in junior public schools who should be sent on to the senior school reception class. The junior school would enquire whether there is space in the reception class before enrolling average pupils. Every attempt should be made to keep pupils in their own age groups and then integration into the regular school programme as soon as possible should be a prime objective."

(b) Education Systems Abroad

Again and again the teachers returned to the theme of the discrepancies between educational systems abroad and the system here. Seventeen teachers noted that the discrepancies created serious obstacles to the child's process of integration. A large number of students come from a background where discipline is considered an essential part of learning. Entering a Canadian school they expect to find authoritarian teachers, difficult work, abundant homework and rigid curriculum -- in the words of one teacher, some students expect "to be beaten by teachers (Greek, Jugoslavian, German, etc.)" The permissive attitude of Canadian schools confuses them.

> "The expectations in discipline often lead to misunderstanding until the child recognizes that he must be self motivated and commit himself to the task with the teacher's aid."

Twenty teachers felt that New Canadian parents also anticipated an authoritarian approach to education. When these expectations are not met the responsibilities of parents are increased. "Disciplining by the schools as was done by European teachers, is now the parents' problem" and another source of "culture conflict."

Other teachers expressed their interest in the subject in terms of curiosity about what kind of education the immigrant child has had. Many wished for a better understanding of educational systems in various countries, about school life and organization, and even about testing and placement. One suggested the use of film to "give us an idea of the background of German and Greek schools." Two others expressed interest in obtaining school records of foreign children. "It would be very interesting to see just how much education some of these students have!!" one wrote. The other, who had

visited the Minister of Education in Rome, thought that perhaps the Research Department in co-ordination with the Italian, Portuguese and Greek governments, could work out some sort of procedure whereby children could bring report cards to Canada along with other pertinent information. "More clarification on the educational background of children is needed," she wrote. Connected to this were a number of teachers who sought "background information about the children's native countries."

(c) The Situation Here

Some concern was also expressed for the quality and type of teaching received by students here. "Teachers who expect too much too soon," were singled out, as was the "indifference of some teachers (especially in higher grades) -- problem of thinking that a silent student is a student without difficulty." Another cited the "lack of help from classroom teachers. They need education (especially experienced teachers who seem to do the least!) on ways to help...." the new students. Another teacher noted that New Canadians should be placed in classrooms with understanding teachers and that people who didn't like this kind of work shouldn't do it.

Other teachers considered their personal needs, and wrote about freedom from outside restrictions, the greatest of which was the clock. Of the 19 teachers who felt that they were prevented in some way from giving their students the individual attention they considered necessary, 13 indicated "a desperate need for more time to work with each student and his individual problems." Smaller classes and freedom from school duties such as yard and lunch patrol were suggested as possible and partial solutions. One compromise to the teaching shortage was suggested as follows:

> "...three or four groups (of similar age) be combined together in one large space which can be adjusted into partitions etc., as required. A group of teachers (one to twelve children) working flexibly with groups formed as required by children's needs. This would mean a larger number of interest centres, more efficient use of equipment and more effective use of teachers."

Twelve teachers felt that they needed some sort of assistance in the form of guidance from or consultation with other special English teachers, or more training, "in linguistics, anthropology, and sociology" or "in new techniques and methods particularly of teaching reading."

Deprivation of things material -- audio-visual aids and books -- were felt by about 35 teachers, responses triggered by question #7. The list supplied by one teacher provides some indication of the extent of these requests. A very few other teachers agreed and felt that more money should be alloted for the purchase of

> "...televisions, experiental and drill games, visual aids, materials for kinesthetic and tactile approach, new instructo kits, flat wall maps, etc."

In contrast, another teacher suggested (and was also supported by a handful of her peers):

> "Review the budget! Not a great deal of money needs to be spent on books or on machines. Machines are often not used every day and could easily be shared in school with a few classrooms. I have found that interest charts provide a much more meaningful reading experience in the beginning than printed books. The libraries can provide reading material that is lacking in the classroom. Some money should be allocated to each class in the form of petty cash. This will pay for trips. Many meaningful trips such as visiting Toronto and the environment have to be completely curtailed because the children just don't have the money. I think provision should be made for at least one trip per month.

Other "needs" include "pictorial explanations of holidays, i.e. Hallowe'en; "furniture which adapts to various activities and ages" and "more language masters." One teacher recommended the establishment of a "Special English Teaching Aids Department which provides readily available materials." Requests were included one for information on ideas and trips and one for making more literature available in several languages. Another teacher asked for "concise and well-prepared materials suitable for normal children" whose only major difficulty is lack of ability in English, or books designed specifically for New Canadians with "high interest level, easy vocabulary and a glossary in the back for more difficult words," or "sophisticated level of interest and low level of English."

> "Transistor radio and record player with adjuster for tape recording, more Milliken projectuals with duplicating stencils, general films on more topics, small table easels, primary typewriter, puppets, arborite trapezoidal tables and chairs, low revolving racks to display pictures, prints, stories, posters, charts, etc."

Another asked for expendable phonic and workbooks, and a third suggested the creation of "slide libraries" in all schools with pictures of Toronto and other Canadian cities, regions of Canada, etc.

Other teachers asked for research into more purely linguistic aspects of method:

> "More information on sentence structure, i.e. a well planned progression of sentence patterns <u>beyond</u> beginners level. The first few sentence patterns are well known but a progression of harder patterns is hard to find in any books on the market to-day."

> "Yes: what is the core in learning English, step by step -- what and which sentence patterns first? which after? Tenses, etc. I would like to see some definite guidelines because as it is many of us are left to play it by ear which means that unless we work out an efficient programme of our own (which we are trying to do) the teaching and learning is rather helter-skelter."

> "A large number of students who have been here 6 or more years have thoroughly learned incorrect speech habits. Research on specific methodology including ways to keep them from total depression. Same thing for those who have been here a shorter period of time and who are inaccurately fluent. (Endings do not show up as badly in speech.) Many of our students have been and will continue to be handicapped by the English they were NOT taught. Why do we have grade thirteen dropouts among bright students? Economics and standard of English."

> "Attention should be given to the great potential that young New Canadians have as a language resource. Is there a possibility of forming a junior linguist club in central Toronto? (UNESCO?)"

Other teachers were forced to be more basic: nine desperately needed "more space." One suggested research to deal with:

> "How the Board can solve the problem of space. Two teachers in a classroom is difficult for the children since the teachers usually have different ideas on class behaviour, and for the teachers for similar reasons."

One teacher requested, very simply, "a classroom."

A Discussion of Three "Programmes"

Differing opinions were evidence as teachers expressed approval or muted disapproval of one of the three programmes in operation. One teacher wrote:

> "I like the results at Main Street School. Here a screening process can take place and some measure of a child's ability can be gained before he or she are placed in a regular programme."

Other teachers recommended the "Main Street type programme for all new arrivals," or "Many more Main Street type schools both public and secondary," or "building a new complex school with proper physical education facilities fashioned after Main Street." But -- other teachers favoured,

> "Isolation in Regional Reception Centres for non English speaking children lasting about 6-10 months. Integration into the regular program as quickly as possible."

And five withdrawal class teachers indicated satisfaction with that programme: "I think our programme goes a long way to meet their needs."

Other comments reflected the possibility that the three programmes were not distinctly different in all aspects, or that there was less -- or more -- to distinguish a programme than its label. Some teachers asked for research into the relative effectiveness of the approaches. Of these, one referred to "various approaches," one to "different methods," one to "withdrawal vs. reception classes," one to "heterogeneous and homogeneous groupings," and one to "complete withdrawal classes [as compared to] highly experiential-based programmes." A sixth teacher saw the different approaches as authoritarian and permissive, regardless of formal programme:

> "Comparison of the results in both the Cognitive and Affective domains of classroom setting stressing acquisition of language skills directly in a fairly authoritarian setting as opposed to that stressing indirect language learning - more 'discovery' oriented - stressing incidental learning in a fairly permissive atmosphere."

Another commented:

> "How can programmes be evaluated and compared when you have various language, socio-economic, and cultural areas in the City? Some teachers including myself, feel that the figures are going to be 'cooked' to favour the one 'apparent' successful programme in the City anyway."

There was also the rather tantalizing point made by one teacher that

> "Perhaps since the system at our school is very different from most because we have Main Street to help all new arrivals, most of the surveys have not contained questions relevant to our situation."

In discussing their vision of an ideal programme ("assuming there were no limitations of any kind," the question read), the teachers revealed again the wide range of opinion existing in the City. For example, of the seven teachers who mentioned basic teaching methods, three recommended "free activities but at the same time some structured programme," or "a combination of the formal and experiential approach." Four others were equally divided as to which aspect should receive the greatest emphasis. Thus, on the one hand recommendations were made for "a completely experiential approach to learning," or,

> "a full time programme of wide scope and variety and of a completely free nature so that the individual needs of the students may be catered to whether they be emotional, linguistic or otherwise."

In direct opposition is the recommendation of "less verbal and experiential approaches; much more writing, grammar and spelling stressed."

Approximately 30 teachers recommended specific programmes for the instruction of New Canadians, and revealed to a surprising degree basic agreement concerning the essential structure of these programmes. These three comments are indicative of the majority:

> "First there should be basic reception classes, then as improvement is evident there should be transition classes and flexible placement in the regular school system."

> "I feel that the students need an all day programme for the first couple of months or as long as the need for security is there, as a child in withdrawal programme in junior school usually sits until he can participate. Then he can drift into half day and quarter day programmes as he begins to interact."

> "For newly arrived New Canadians full time special English classes should be implemented. As soon as they have a basic vocabulary (two months) they should spend half days in class, then whole days except one hour a day. This should take no longer than three to four months."

Other teachers suggested interesting variations on the programme already in existence:

> "Perhaps the schools could accommodate both parents and children for the first three months."
>
> "For the first five weeks -- pupils in classrooms and withdrawal classes (so pupils can become familiar with the sounds of English and used to routines): total immersion for three-quarters of the day for six months - taper off according to students needs."
>
> "Reception classes for grades three, four and five (now only six, seven and eight)."

Ten teachers favoured a programme of "half day reception classes and half day regular classes," and one teacher suggested that more men be encouraged to teach New Canadians. She also commented upon the desirability of secondary-level students having access to all aspects of curriculum, including sports, shop, home economics, etc. and noted that few Reception Centre teachers were qualified to take all these subjects.

SUMMARY

Copies of an open-ended questionnaire were sent to all teachers of English as a second language in May, 1968. About 40% of the teachers responded and indicated, in their responses, at least part of the range of opinions and suggestions existing in the City.

Running throughout the responses were expressions of concern for the New Canadian student and for his family, and suggestions as to how their problems might be alleviated. A great many teachers felt that the schools should formally extend themselves into the community and provide more assistance.

Another common theme was the expressed desire of teachers to know more about immigrants in general, particularly the children, and the forces that have shaped them. Reading the responses one feels that the teachers have made numerous observations, and received many impressions, but are searching for a framework to give them meaning. The teachers expressed a desire to know more about the native cultures of their pupils, and about the educational systems that have shaped their expectations and feelings about school. Some teachers also expressed a desire for formal diagnostic tools, such as culturally unbiased tests, that would enable the students' potentials and abilities to be more clearly understood.

Also discussed were the second-language programmes operating in the City, and activities currently prevalent in the classrooms. Some aspects of the way in which "the system" operates here (notably placement procedures) were criticized, and, again, suggestions to overcome these shortcomings were made.

APPENDIX

(Sample of Questionnaire Sent to Special English Teachers in May, 1968)

NEW CANADIAN STUDY

As part of the New Canadian Study, the Research Department is interested in the thoughts and opinions of the teachers who are most involved in teaching newly arrived non-English speaking children. It would be appreciated if you would answer the following questions and return them in the envelope provided. Your answers will be used as a basis for understanding prevailing philosophies and activities in the City. It is not necessary to identify yourself, but it would be helpful if you could check the programme in which you teach:

- ☐ Main Street
- ☐ Regional Reception Centre
- ☐ Withdrawal Classes
- ☐ Other (please describe) _____

Please make your comments and observations brief. Point form answers would be very satisfactory. Answer on the back of this sheet, numbering your questions. (Attach an additional page if required.)

1. What are the greatest problems faced by New Canadian students?

2. What is the most important thing(s) the schools can do for New Canadian children?

3. What do you think New Canadian children expect from the school?

4. What do you think the parents of New Canadian students expect from the schools?

5. Of the many interrelated activities you carry on with your New Canadian students, which activities are most frequent in your classroom?

6. Assuming there were no limitations of any kind, what programme or procedures would you like to see implemented for newly arrived non-English speaking students?

7. With reference to your teaching activities, what is your most desperate need?

8. Are there any particular areas that you would like to see the Research Department note or attend to as part of the New Canadian Study?

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